



# National Child Care Information Center

*A service of the Child Care Bureau*

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## STATE STRATEGIES to EMBED EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES in EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Many States develop their early learning guidelines (ELGs) with a wide group of stakeholders. Achieving agreement on expectations for young children—the content of what they need to know, understand, and be able to do—serves as a catalyst for deepening partnerships. Similarly, discussions and agreement on expectations for *adults* who work with young children—core knowledge and competencies, or core content—serve as mechanisms for strengthening early care and education (ECE) professional development partnerships and systems. Content is at the crux of systematically embedding ELGs into professional development systems—the intersection of the content for young children and the adults who care for them.

From the process of achieving common content agreement to implementing strategies based on such agreements, States are undertaking various approaches to linking their early learning guidelines (ELGs) with their professional development activities and systems. The following information illustrates some of the strategies States are employing and their next steps in continuing this work.

### Aligning ELGs and Core Knowledge and Competencies

The **Delaware** Office of Child Care Licensing professional development section (Delaware First) provides a 132-hour core curriculum training course for ECE providers—*Training for Early Care and Education* (TECE). Originally based on content recommended by Delaware First's higher education advisory board, the curriculum provides a foundational training for practitioners. The Early Learning Foundations for School Success (Delaware's ELGs) are now part of the TECE. Delaware First incorporated the Foundations into the training and the State's ECE staff competency document. The new curriculum features enhanced numeracy and early literacy development areas, and the new competency document incorporates focus group suggestions.



#### *Next Steps*

- Share the new staff competency document with all ECE practitioners
- Continue conversations with higher education institutions regarding the incorporation of the Early Learning Foundations into preservice coursework and Statewide articulation of the TECE curriculum training
- Develop and disseminate Early Learning Foundation companion documents that provide specific activities and ideas on translating concepts into practice and daily routines
- Develop and implement short-term community trainings focused on incorporating the Early Learning Foundations into curriculum and practice
- Finish the development of the State's birth to 3 ELGs

Delaware's Early Learning Foundations are available on the Web at [http://www.doe.state.de.us/early\\_childhood/Standards/28372\\_Schoolbook.pdf](http://www.doe.state.de.us/early_childhood/Standards/28372_Schoolbook.pdf). Additional information about Delaware First's TECE curriculum is available on the Web at [http://www.state.de.us/kids/occl\\_defirst.htm](http://www.state.de.us/kids/occl_defirst.htm) or by contacting the Career Development Manager, Office of Child Care Licensing at 302-892-5800.

## **West Virginia's Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System (PIECES)**

Professional Development subcommittee revised the State's core knowledge and competencies, with attention to alignment with the State's ELGs. Partners from all early childhood sectors worked on the new edition, creating a framework and common language that applies to child care, Head Start, and public education. Partners from higher education were involved in drafting the document and providing feedback. There are now three tiers in each of the competency areas, which outline a continuum of knowledge and skill acquisition. The new core content is being used to write the curriculum for a collaborative college-level summer institute for prekindergarten staff.



### ***Next Steps***

- Re-examine training approval processes
- Use core competencies as a lever for Statewide articulation

West Virginia's *Early Learning Standards Framework: Content Standards and Learning Criteria for West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten* is available on the Web at [http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2520.15\\_ne.doc](http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2520.15_ne.doc). The revised core competencies are available on the Web at [www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf); for additional information contact the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources at 304-558-1885.

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## **Examining All State Trainings and Professional Development Offerings**

The **M**aine Roads Core Knowledge Training Program is articulated for nine college credits at eight institutions that offer an Associate's degree in ECE. Through articulation or transfer agreements, graduates from the Associate's degree programs matriculate into a Bachelor's degree program. Maine credits the creation of this articulated pathway for ECE practitioners to a shared vision for quality ECE. This shared vision was developed through strong collaborative relationships among the key training and education providers, including early childhood higher education, the child care resource and referral agencies, Head Start, the State child care block grant agency, and the career development center.

Maine brought together all of these professional development partners to begin examining the trainings and professional development opportunities the State offers its early childhood workforce in the specific domains delineated by their Early Learning Results (Maine's ELGs). The group mapped out the levels, target practitioners, methods and frequency of delivery, and geographic locations of trainings and educational opportunities. Then the discussions and plans focused on where there were gaps and repetitions, and what the next steps to strengthen the system would be. Two of the 11 Early Learning Results' domain areas were focused on at the group's first meeting in 2003. The partners continued to address the additional domain areas in subsequent meetings.



### ***Next Steps***

- Reconvene the large group for further strategic planning

Additional information about Maine Roads Core Knowledge Training Program is available on the Web at <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/CoreKnowledgeTraining.html>. For more information about *The State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Results* (Draft, July 2003) contact the State of Maine Office of Child Care and Head Start on the Web at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/occhs> or at 207-287-5060.

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## Conference Planning

**Missouri's** OPEN Initiative developed a *Guide for Conference Planners: Integrating the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in Kansas and Missouri and Missouri's Early Childhood Standards* (2003). The planning tool includes concise overviews of the bi-State core competencies and Missouri's ELGs; keys for the competencies (content and level) and the ELGs; and sample forms such as calls for proposals, conference participant certificates, evaluations, and trainer approval recommendations. The OPEN initiative also provides a display board for conferences, and along with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides suggestions of presenters to cover a session specifically on the ELGs and/or core competencies.



### *Next Steps*

- Encourage conference planners to use the Guide and the Trainer Registry for recruitment
- Work towards adoption of trainer approval criteria by the Department of Health and Human Services

Missouri's *Guide for Conference Planners: Integrating the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in Kansas and Missouri and Missouri's Early Childhood Standards* is available on the Web at <http://www.openinitiative.org/pdfs/Core%20Competencies/confplan.pdf>. Kansas and Missouri's *Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* is available on the Web at <http://www.openinitiative.org/pdfs/Core%20Competencies/CoreCompetencies.pdf>. Missouri's *Pre-K Standards* are available on the Web at [http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/fedprog/earlychild/PreK\\_Standards.html](http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/fedprog/earlychild/PreK_Standards.html).

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## Tying ELGs to Curriculum

**Arkansas** tied its Early Childhood Education Framework (the State's ELGs) to curriculum training from entry- to advanced-level professional development. Framework training as an approach to curriculum development, benchmarking, assessment, and observation of young children is delivered Statewide in a variety of settings including institutions providing Child Development Associate (CDA) credential training, community colleges, technical institutes, and teacher learning centers.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System SPECTRUM (career lattice) plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education. The Framework is included in the SPECTRUM as part of the Child Care Curriculum Endorsement. To receive this endorsement, practitioners must complete the following courses:

1. The Child from Birth to Three: Framework, Assessment, and Activities;
2. The Child from Three to Five: Framework, Assessment, and Activities;
3. The Child from Five to Twelve: School Age Activities;
4. Family Child Care; and
5. Understanding Children and Their Behavior.

The *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework* is available on the Web at <http://www.accessarkansas.org/childcare/earlyeducframework.pdf>; the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care* is available on the Web at <http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/bench.pdf>. For additional information, contact the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education on the Web at <http://www.state.ar.us/childcare> or at 501-682-4891.

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## Partnering with Higher Education

Part of many States' efforts to embed the ELGs in professional development systems includes involving higher education partners. In most States, these partners already serve important roles in State professional development systems, but goals of engaging them in this specific work include the incorporation of ELGs into preservice coursework and achieving consistency on core content at all levels.

Revising college courses often takes several years, and involves agreement and approval from many sections of a higher education institution. Several of **Indiana's** higher education early education departments have incorporated the Indiana Foundations (the State's ELGs) into their post secondary ECE curriculum, including Ivy State Tech College and the University of Southern Indiana. Ball State University's early childhood training for Head Start staff incorporates the Foundations in class syllabi.

In higher education programs, ELGs can:

- ★ Serve as an index to child development principles;
- ★ Highlight child developmental stages;
- ★ Be used as an additional textbook for child growth and development classes;
- ★ Contain indicators that illustrate moving theories to practice;
- ★ Assist with curriculum planning and environment set-up; and
- ★ Aid in the creation of consistent areas of knowledge and competencies from entry- to advanced-levels—consistent and agreed upon content areas can make articulation easier.

*The Foundations for Young Children to the Indiana Academic Standards* is available on the Web at <http://www.doe.state.in.us/primetime/welcome.html>. For additional information contact the Director of the Center for School Improvement and Performance, Division of Prime Time, Indiana Department of Education at 317-232-9152.

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## ELGs for Families and Practitioners

With so many new developments and products for young children in the market place, it can be difficult for both families and practitioners to integrate quality materials into their activities with young children. In addition to systematic efforts to embed ELGs in professional development, several States have created unique and attractive materials to support the meaningful use of ELGs.

**Maryland's** Ready At Five Partnership is a Statewide, public/private nonprofit committed to increasing the number of children entering school ready to succeed. The Partnership developed seven "activity boxes"—one for each of the areas delineated in the State's ELGs. Colorful activity cards list materials, activities and background information; black-and-white versions of the activity cards, best for photocopying, are also available.

Maryland's activity cards are available on the Web at [http://www.readyatfive.org/activities/activity\\_box.html](http://www.readyatfive.org/activities/activity_box.html).

While developing their ELGs, **Rhode Island** made a conscientious effort to include families. A special parent committee, led by a Head Start parent involvement technical assistance specialist, reviewed the guidelines for family friendliness. This group developed the idea for, and the content of activity cards that highlight the domains and expectations in the ELGs. The cards are color coded to match the structure of the Rhode Island ELGs, and are available in English and Spanish.

Rhode Island's activity cards are available on the Web at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/els>, under the Family Materials topic.

The **California** Department of Education, Child Development Division (CDD) has required publicly funded, center-based programs and family child care homes to use the Desired Results system since 2002, with a four-year implementation process to reach all providers. The Desired Results Developmental Profiles (California's ELGs) are part of this system. Each year, the CDD trains those programs that will have a compliance review and be monitored on the components of the Desired Results system. All of the new Desired Results requirements, including the Developmental Profiles, Desired Results Parent Survey, program standards, and environment rating scales, are mandatory components of the system.

Community, cultural, linguistic, and individual variations, as well as the diversity of child care settings, are acknowledged in the materials and implementation process. The Desired Results materials have been translated into Spanish, and Chinese and Vietnamese languages. Materials range from posters to comprehensive training guides.

Copies of California's Desired Results reference materials and forms are available on the Web at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/drdpforms.asp>. Additional Desired Results materials, including translated materials, are available on the Web at <http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/desiredresults/training>.

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